

**LOCALS' PERCEPTIONS OF RURAL TOURISM
IMPACTS IN METHLANG, POKHARA**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Prithvi Narayan Campus/ Tribhuvan University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master in Sociology

Submitted by:

Sagar Prasad Tiwari

Roll No: 48/ 075

TU Reg No: 6-3-48-48-2018

October 2022

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that **Mr. Sagar Prasad Tiwari** has completed this dissertation entitled “*Locals’ perceptions of rural tourism impacts in Methlang, Pokhara*” under my supervision and guidance. This dissertation is an original work and fulfills all standard academic requirements. I, therefore, recommend this dissertation for final approval and acceptance by the evaluation committee.

Mr. Bharat Gurung

Department of Sociology,

Prithvi Narayan Campus,

Pokhara, Nepal

LETTER OF APPROVAL

A dissertation entitled “*Locals’ perceptions of rural tourism impacts in Methlang, Pokhara*” submitted to the department of Sociology, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara by **Mr. Sagar Prasad Tiwari** has been accepted and approved by the undersigned members of the Dissertation Evaluation Committee.

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

(Mr. Bharat Gurung)

Supervisor

(Mr. Netra Narayan Poudel)

External Examiner

(Mr. Shiva Bahadur Thapa)

Department Head

Department of Sociology

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

Date: 17th October 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my respected Dissertation Supervisor, Mr. Bharat Gurung, for his unremitting support, guidance, efforts and time throughout the Dissertation preparation. I feel fortunate to be under his supervision; without him, this work would not have been possible. My sincere appreciation goes to respected Mr. Shibaji Gurung, for providing his valuable insights during the research process. I am also grateful to Mr. Shiva Bahadur Thapa, Department Head of Sociology, for his supervision regarding the format of this Dissertation.

My special thanks go to the Faculty members of Humanity and Social Sciences, Lecturers, and well-wishers for their direct and indirect support, encouragement, and constructive criticism throughout the preparation of this Dissertation. I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Bishwo Kallyan Parajuli, for his thoughtful guidance and feedback during the initial phase of choosing the subject. I'm immensely thankful to Mr. Netra Narayan Poudel, Department of Sociology, for providing useful suggestions and support as an External Evaluator.

I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to my respondents of Methlang, Pokhara, for permitting their invaluable time, and helping me take in-depth interviews in a friendly environment to treasure their views and experiences regarding tourism, in the process of data collection.

I would further like to acknowledge all my college friends who supported and extended love toward me with their kind inspiring words in times of loneliness and desperation. Not to forget my family members, especially my moms, Mrs. Bishnu Mati Tiwari and Mrs. Dhan Kali Tiwari, who always pray for me and have been my great source of inspiration.

Finally, I thank God for always showing me the right path and helping me to overcome inner fear, and hearing my dreams and fulfilling them. Thank you all for your kindness and untiring support!

Sagar Prasad Tiwari

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Letter of Recommendation	ii
Letter of Approval	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vii
Abbreviations	viii
Abstract	ix
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION.....	1-7
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	6
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.5 Limitations of the Study.....	7
1.6 Organization of the Study.....	7
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8-18
2.1 Theoretical Overview.....	8
2.2 Review of Previous Studies and Finding Gaps.....	10
2.2.1 Global Context.....	11
2.2.2 Nepalese Context.....	13
2.3 Conceptual Framework.....	17
CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODS.....	19-23
3.1 Rationale for the Site Selection.....	19
3.2 Research Design.....	19
3.3 Universe and Sampling.....	20
3.4 Nature and Sources of Data.....	21
3.5 Data Collection Procedure.....	21
3.6 Ethical Consideration.....	22

3.7	Data Processing and Analysis.....	23
CHAPTER FOUR	LOCALS' PERCEPTION REGARDING RURAL	
	TOURISM.....	24-29
4.1	Popularity of Methlang.....	24
4.2	Changes in Occupation.....	25
4.3	Reasons for Adopting new Occupation.....	26
CHAPTER FIVE	SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM.....	30-43
5.1	Changes in Locals' Cultural Beliefs and Behaviors.....	30
5.2	Societal changes and their Causes.....	33
5.3	Distribution of Benefits among Locals.....	38
5.4	Tourists' Demands and Problems faced by locals.....	38
5.5	Locals' views regarding improvement of tourism.....	40
CHAPTER SIX	SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, AND	
	CONCLUSION.....	44-50
6.1	Major Findings.....	44
6.2	Conclusion.....	49
	References.....	51-54
	Appendix A. Informed Consent Form.....	55
	Appendix B. Interview Schedule for Locals.....	56
	Appendix C. Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.....	58
	Appendix D. Map of Methlang, Pokhara.....	59
	Appendix E. Photos from the Site.....	60

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page No.
Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework of Locals' Perceptions of the impacts of rural tourism in Methlang, Pokhara	18

ABBREVIATIONS

ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoN	Government of Nepal
IUOTO	International Union of Official Travel Organization
NRT	Nepal Rural Tourism
NTB	Nepal Tourism Board
NTS	Nepal Tourism Statistics
NVR	Nepal Village Resorts
PMC	Pokhara Metropolitan City
THT	The Himalayan Times
TIA	Tribhuvan International Airport
TKP	The Kathmandu Post
TU	Tribhuvan University
UN	United Nations
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Tourism Organization

ABSTRACT

This study is entitled as “Locals’ Perception towards Rural Tourism Impacts: A case in Methlang, Pokhara”. The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze detailed impacts (positive and negative) of rural tourism as perceived by the locals in Methlang, Pokhara due to the flow of international and domestic tourists. This aids the researcher to acknowledge whether the locals are overall satisfied with the influx of tourists in their area and the tourism establishments; whether tourism has facilitated the locals to upgrade their socio-economic status or not, or whether is it putting pressure on locals stimulating them to follow foreign cultures, norms and behaviors just to please tourists during their stay. For the study, in-depth interviews were carried out among 14 respondents from Methlang, Pokhara to collect data until saturation. Respondents were selected purposively; and were included in unstructured, in-depth face-to-face interviews for qualitative study.

It was noticeable that locals expressed their overall satisfaction with thriving tourism in their area. Although it has brought some detrimental impacts on socio-cultural lives and the behaviors of locals, almost all opine that the advantages of this tendency far outweigh the drawbacks.

Exploring more into the topic, it was found that rural tourism in Methlang, Pokhara is slowly shifting towards urban features and planning. Due to several issues in promoting traditional agriculture and farms, locals are seeking service-oriented businesses such as opening up restaurants, cottages, and hotels for tourists; and finding jobs in paragliding sectors and jeep-driving, as these are more profitable than continuing with traditional farming. This picture can also be justified by the appearance of recent touristic establishments in the area destroying the less valuable agricultural farms. When tourists start to grow in an area, the locals lose control and seek immediate gratification. This tendency could ultimately lead to the loss of cultural identity, and change in locals’ behavior, and in their socio-cultural lives. Although the negative sides are far too low in Methlang, Pokhara as per the locals so far, these serious impacts cannot be underestimated, as they may start to appear in the future.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

When it comes to understanding tourism, in its general terms, we think of traveling to a particular place for pleasure, visiting friends and relatives, taking a vacation, engaging in various sports, or simply enjoying the environment. If we further delve into this topic, we may include the business meetings and conferences in which people participate. Tourism is the processes, activities, and industries that cater to the needs of visitors traveling individually or in a group away from their homes who are in search of a pleasurable travel experience.

Rural/ Village tourism is a new concept introduced in the World Tourism industry. Rural tourism began to spread in the early 1970s but only started to attract significant interest in the literature in the early 1990s (Butler et al., 1980). UNWTO understands Rural Tourism as "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/ culture, angling, and sightseeing. Rural Tourism activities take place in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics: i) low population density, ii) landscape and land-use dominated by agriculture and forestry, and iii) traditional social structure and lifestyle".

Before the introduction and development of rural-village tourism in Nepal, most of the tourism activities were limited to major trekking routes, mountains, and adventure tourism. The concept of rural tourism was introduced to increase and maximize economic benefits arising from tourism over a wider range and generate job opportunities for the local community that depends only on agriculture. With the help of the Nepal Government, basic infrastructures were provided such as roads, telecommunications, and electricity, and in 1995, a village (rural) tourism program was included in the national tourism policy in Nepal. The concept of village tourism was introduced and then Nepal Village Resorts (NVR), a Kathmandu-based travel agency serving as a marketing agency of the village tourism product, launched village tourism for the first time in Nepal in Sirubari Village in 1997. The local community

people were actively engaged in the Sirubari Village Tourism planning stages. Since then other villages also started the village tourism program taking the example of the Sirubari program (Upadhyay, 2008).

In the context of Nepal, rural tourism plays a vital role in the overall development of many sectors such as employment, income, GDP of the country, socio-economic growth, and the like. It is also one of the important parts of tourism which have both potentialities of growing easily and easy earning for any kind of people. In the country where most of the part is rural areas, this sector shows a promising potentiality for tourism development.

Today, the majority of travelers seek an authentic, reliable, and unique experience, a change from familiar hotel chains, luxurious stays, strict packages, and queues at scenic views. People want the opportunity to deeply experience another region's and country's people, culture, and local environment. With more than 80% of the population living in the rural village areas of Nepal, travelers can stay at home-stay in villages, getting an opportunity to know, learn and experience the rich social values, religions, and traditional culture of the local people. At the same time, visitors can also look at some of the most stunning landscapes on earth in some hilly and mountainous rural areas (Nepal Rural Tourism, 2015).

The benefit for foreigners would be getting a chance to reside with typical Nepalese family and their members, learning about the local tradition, history, lifestyle, and culture. They will get the opportunity to involve in day-to-day village life activities, functions, and events.

The development of rural tourism generates many job opportunities in villages and rural areas. It can contribute a lot towards economic prosperity and raise the living standard of local-community people. In recent days, many youths from the village are leaving the country seeking employment in other gulf countries. Rural tourism can help in job retention so that the youth do not have to migrate to other countries seeking employment. Tourism brings money to the local community and that money can be reused for the development and maintenance of the place. It helps the new business boom. The local community can earn money by selling handicrafts. There will be more demand for local fresh food businesses. Since the local culture and

heritage are the source of their prosperity, local people are inspired to preserve their rural culture and heritage by themselves (Shrestha, 2016).

Over the last few years, the concept of homestays has been adopted by Nepal Rural Tourism in Nepal for the easy and convenient accommodation of visitors in the village areas. This is now creating an opportunity for housewives in Nepal to earn some household income using their local resources from the local community (Shrestha, 2000).

However, in the past two decades increased attention to the negative social, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism have also emerged, calling for more careful planning and management of tourism development (World Tourism Organization, 1997).

Despite many positive benefits in the surrounding environment, many activities performed by tourism can have disadvantageous environmental effects. This makes the complex relationship between the tourism industry and the surrounding environment. For the development of better tourism, there has been a huge construction making roads, restaurants, cafes, hotels, shops, and amusement parks. And these constructions are linked with environmental impacts due to tourism. We can find common links with each other among the impacts of tourism. For example, where mass visitation flows in a specific region or place, the local culture and tradition is not the only thing that gets affected, but in the meantime, there are also some negative impacts on the local environment occurred by tourism (Pandey et al., 1995).

The vast development of tourism may create negative impacts and problems in the local environment. It includes the construction and development of infrastructures, evolving remote areas into urban areas, deforestation and pollution. This has been a major problem in developing nations where they want to develop tourism for the development of their people and country. A largely rural country having only 17 percent of the total habitats living in urban rural areas, Nepal is urbanizing rapidly. It is suffering from bizarre problems and challenges due to rapid urbanization and modernization leading to the loss of open, free space, and decreased livability (World Bank, 2009).

This paper intends to explore the impacts of Rural Tourism in Methlang, Pokhara, and gain an insight into the locals' perception regarding rural tourism development and its practice.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Ideally, the tourism of Pokhara is believed to be sustainable due to its bewitching beauty as described by many travelers. Its pristine air, spectacular backdrop of snowy peaks, serene lake, and surrounding greenery make it an ultimate destination for tourists for relaxation. Tourism has been a major source of economy in this valley. It has become successful in providing jobs to many locals as well as migrants from remote places. An increasing number of international tourists has been recorded in the recent decade in Pokhara and is expected to continue in the future. The year 2018 proved to be a banner year for Pokhara when the lake city welcomed nearly 30 new hotels, and the number of overnight visitors jumped to more than a million. Hotels have not only proliferated; their revenue has hit record highs (The Kathmandu Post, 13th Dec 2018). Thus, tourism in Pokhara provides many opportunities and benefits to the locals as well as the investors by aiding them improve their living standards, diversify their livelihood and help them earn more profits. The tourists, on the other hand, also benefit from experiencing the cultural variations, way of life, and the relaxing landscape that are different from their usual environment.

However, the main concern here is, that international as well as domestic tourists have been attracted to dwell in the rural areas of Pokhara in the recent decade. This situation and the trend have not only brought pros, but cons too. It is obvious that the precedent of Pokhara valley being pollution-free and low population density is slowly fading away. According to CBS data of 2011 A.D., the total population of Pokhara Metropolitan City is 4,13,397. The population is increasing tremendously with the increment of construction of roads and other facilities for sustainable development witnessing a sharp rise in the figure reaching 5,23,000 in 2020. It has been seen that to meet tourists' expectations and to cater to their needs while their stay in Pokhara, far more hotels, restaurants, cafes, pubs, adventure sports, and various leisure and recreation infrastructures have been built. To fulfill their expectation, locals inadvertently or deliberately have created what John Urry refers to as "the tourist gaze" (1990, 1996). Locals as well as foreign investors are pouring an enormous

amount of capital into constructing high-rise accommodation buildings. This tendency has not only led to an excessive burden on natural resources; but has also obstructed the natural view of the lake, serene mountains, and many more that the tourists would like to observe. Thus, it has become a sophisticated concrete jungle where the natural beauty is slowly dying. Until now, most of the studies that have been carried out regarding the building of infrastructures and providing services and facilities to tourists are from tourists' perceptions. However, it has not been attempted to comprehend from the locals' point of view: What do they feel regarding tourism-related infrastructure construction? Do the advantages of rural tourism outweigh the disadvantages, especially for locals? Is rural tourism sustainable? What are the positive as well as negative impacts of rural tourism?

Thus, the development of rural tourism has been slowly impacting the locals' way of life positively as well as negatively in Methlang of Pokhara. This problem was identified by the researcher while having a casual conversation with the locals living in that area. They were pouring out their satisfaction as well as dissatisfaction to the researcher which acted as fuel to research more on this issue.

Many of the issues mentioned above have been taken into consideration by various authors and writers. However, there is a lack of research regarding this topic. To the best of my knowledge, qualitative research, by noting the in-depth perceptions of locals in rural areas of Pokhara, has not been done to dig the insights and investigate the actual picture of whether they are satisfied with the flow of tourists bringing in positive and negative impacts. This study thus aims to undertake a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of locals living in this quieter area of Pokhara valley. This research is to find the answer to the following issues:

- What are the perceptions of local people regarding rural tourism development in Methlang, Pokhara?
- What are the impacts of tourists on the socio-economic and socio-cultural lives of locals?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research is to analyze the perceptions of local people regarding tourism development in rural areas of Pokhara-Lekhnath, Nepal. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To study the perception of local people regarding rural tourism development in Methlang, Pokhara
2. To explore the impacts of tourists on the socio-economic and socio-cultural lives of locals.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Nepal is a developing country, mostly with tough geographic conditions. More than the cities, a vast majority of people reside in rural and remote areas. And for the development of these rural areas and to raise the living standard (economy) of people living, Nepal has concentrated on rural tourism with huge importance. Rural tourism emphasizes the possibility of introducing and enlightening the main treasures of the country, i.e. culture, customs, and traditions. The development of rural tourism offers visitors to get familiarized and introduced to the everyday life and local culture of the residents within their direct participation which is now the rapidly growing tourism in the country.

This study will open the door for other researchers and sociologists to focus on the impacts of rural tourism on the socioeconomic lives of local people, their environment, and their livelihood. This study will help create the required environment and develop tourism-friendly infrastructures for the promotion of tourism in the present scenario. Hence, this study will be useful for new researchers, and tourism business institutions.

As the sociology of tourism is concerned with the study of tourist motivations, roles, relationships, and institutions and their impact on tourists and on the societies who receive them, this research paper will add rich literature in the field of sociology.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

This study is an academic study and was carried out in a shorter period during 2022. Besides, the researcher was bound by limited funds and other resources. Only 14 respondents were included. They were selected purposively until saturation in their responses. Only a qualitative approach has been used. This study was carried out in Ward number 18 of Methlang, Pokhara. More areas could have been included in a broader study. The findings, references, and subject matter may not be the same for other rural areas regarding tourism impacts.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This study encompasses six chapters. The first chapter of the introduction discusses the background of the study which includes the general understanding of tourism, rural tourism and its impacts (positive as well as negative) as perceived by the locals in their communities. This chapter also contains a statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and organization of the study. It also includes the limitations and significance of this study.

The second chapter encloses a literature review based on the research subject. It starts with a theoretical overview discussing some existing theories based on the topic and then reviews the existing literature in a global context and Nepalese context. It also includes the conceptual framework of the study showing the relationship between different variables being used in the study with the help of a diagram. The fourth chapter accommodates research methods, which reveals the tools and techniques used by the researcher in this study to collect and analyze data. It deals with the rationale of the selection of the study area, research design, nature and sources of data, sampling and data collection techniques, data processing, and analysis.

The fourth chapter contains the study of locals' perceptions regarding rural tourism. It encompasses the analysis of qualitative data collected from the respondents of the research area, which are descriptive and explorative in nature. The fifth chapter includes the perception of locals regarding the socio-cultural impacts brought about by tourism. The sixth chapter, the final chapter, summarizes the research findings with a conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Overview

The term “globalization” is mainly identified in the economic and social areas. Globalization is the word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world’s economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technologies, and flows of investment, people, and information. It is a situation in which available goods and services, or social and cultural influences, gradually become similar in all parts of the world. Tourism is regarded as part of the process of globalization. Tourism is considered to be a significant tool for economic development. It functions as a factor stimulating both local and regional socioeconomic development on a micro- and macroeconomic scale. The development of this sector globally impacts the level of change in the direction of development and the economy-stimulating function contributing to the emergence of new tourist destinations, attractive for tourist traffic. The following factors have a considerable influence on globalization in tourism: unlimited access to information, development and constant modernization of means of transport, free markets and related foreign trade, expansion of hotel chains into international markets, significant demand for tourist services, and international competition. On a global scale, tourism is treated as a priority sector on account of the economic benefits, and may stimulate the socio-economic development of tourist reception areas, and consequently of the country’s economy by contributing to the growth of GDP and foreign exchange revenues-stimulating the development of entrepreneurship and infrastructure, creating new jobs and increasing the income of the local population of tourist regions, increasing the income of companies offering services to tourists and favoring entrepreneurship and innovation (Brelík, 2018).

Modernization refers to a model of a progressive transition from a "pre-modern" or "traditional" to "modern" society. Modernization theory suggests that traditional societies will develop as they adopt more modern practices. Proponents of modernization theory claim that modern states are wealthier and more powerful and

that their citizens are freer to enjoy a higher standard of living. Talcott Parsons (1964) was especially critical of the traditional values of underdeveloped countries, which were too attached to traditional customs, rituals, practices and institutions, which Parsons argued were the 'enemy of progress'. Parsons believed that undeveloped countries need to become more receptive to Western values and develop an 'entrepreneurial spirit' to promote economic growth (Robertson et al., 1989).

However, tourism is believed to wreck other kinds of havoc at the local level in host communities. Tourism seemed to be introducing new kinds of economic, social and cultural problems. Wage labor opportunities created through tourism were disrupting the subsistence activities of small producers. Oliver-Smith (1989) described a case in Spain in which local hosts substituted their labor in farming with work in tourism. The disruption of subsistence activities was not necessarily a problem in itself, but it became a problem when the flow of tourists was reduced, and people were left with no economic alternatives from which to sustain themselves. A second problem found with tourism-fueled development is that it often leads to increased wealth stratification in host communities, ultimately exacerbating social conflict. In addition, "commodification of culture" exists due to intercultural contact between donor culture and recipient culture, which is described as a process by which things come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade, thereby becoming goods (Cohen 1988). Tourism can lead to a kind of "cultural dependency" in which local people gain economic benefits, but only as they are catering to the need of outsiders. Loss of identity occurs in this scenario as the local economy improves and hosts begin to act and think like tourists (Stronza, 2001).

When studying rural tourism development and its main drivers or factors influencing the trends, it is essential to apply a systematic approach to the development of certain areas and their transformations. Thus, it is necessary to apply the evolutionary rural tourism development model (Butler, 1980). Several studies have been carried out on the evolution of tourism, which is based on the travel life cycle (Butler, 1980). The most famous and widely accepted cyclical theory of tourism development was elaborated by R. Butler. It includes 7 stages: (1) Exploration, (2) Inclusion, (3) Enlargement, (4) Exacerbation, (5) Renewal, (6) Stagnation and (7) The downturn. These theories present the cyclical pattern of tourism development and advocate that

the changes in the tourism market are not happening due to economic, social or physical reasons, but due to changing nature of the tourism market and the changing tourist motivation. Thus, this evolutionary theory provides us with an understanding of the dynamism of rural tourism, and defines tourism development as a natural process of change (Butler, 1980).

Erik Cohen (1984) conceives the touristic process as a commercialization of the traditional guest-host relationship through which tourists were given a temporary role and status in the society they visited. The tourist-local relationship is based on and is regulated by two sociocultural systems: a native system and the tourist system. The evolutionary dynamics of the relationship consist of a transition from the former to the latter, depicting the process as the commercialization or commoditization of hospitality.

Sutton (1967) characterized the tourist-local relationship as a “series of encounters between visitors who are on the move to enjoy themselves, and hosts who are relatively stationary and who have the function of catering to these visitors’ needs and wishes.” Such encounters are believed to be non-repetitive, transitory and asymmetrical, and are oriented towards immediate gratification rather than maintaining a continuous relationship.

Dean Maccannell’s (1973) idea of “staged authenticity” has contributed much to the sociological study of tourism. It is a cultural practice, event or activity that is staged or modified for tourists. A similar view is also presented by John Urry with the concept of “the tourist gaze”. Urry (1990) argues that the gaze is the set of expectations that tourists place on locals when they participate in heritage tourism, in the search for an authentic experience. Local people, in response to tourist expectations, reflect the gaze to benefit financially.

2.2 Review of Previous Studies and Research Gaps

2.2.1 Global Context

Local people positively perceive rural tourism as it provides job opportunities, creates a flow of investment and source of income, helps in infrastructure and services development, and is a way of improving welfare (Abdollahzadeh et al., 2012).

If local people invest in developing tourist areas, they will obtain greater benefits and therefore have a positive attitude towards tourism, but this may not be easy every time as land values could be very prohibitive for small-scale entrepreneurs (Lepp, 2007). If local people cannot generate economic benefits out of tourism which affects sometimes their social and religious life, it would be more problematic for them to accept tourism and easily allow a negative attitude toward tourism as a cost of living would show an increase in line with tourism (Liu et al., 1987).

Aref (2011), studied the topic “*The effects of tourism on quality of life: A case study of Shiraz, Iran*”. It used a questionnaire survey to examine the effect of tourism on the quality of life of 200 residents in the communities. The questionnaire was structured around a Likert scale. A face-to-face onsite self-administered survey was conducted using the convenience sampling method. The results of this study provided some explanation of tourism’s effect on the quality of life. The results showed that respondents strongly agree that tourism has many effects on their quality of life.

In the parallel vein, Chuang (2013), conducted research on the topic “*Residents’ attitudes toward rural tourism in Taiwan: A comparative viewpoint*”. This study investigated residents’ attitudes toward rural tourism development, using a questionnaire composed of economic, social and environmental impacts. 280 questionnaires were distributed to residents in Tongsiao and Nanjuang. The study concluded that there are more positive than negative impacts of rural tourism in economic, social and environmental dimensions. Meanwhile, the majority of residents in both study areas showed high support for local tourism development.

Besides these, members of rural families in a situation of unemployment can ensure a suitable job and income in their household because agro-tourism increases employment on the farm. Rural tourism is a direct generator of income for members of the rural community, allows the improvement of living standards and especially the development of infrastructure and beautification of localities and landscape, helps prevent environmental degradation, and last but not least spends funds on important public infrastructure (Kataya, 2021).

A similar case of rural tourism could be seen in China, which is rich in rural tourism resources. The living standards of Chinese residents have generally improved. At the same time, tourism has become more and more normalized. Tourism is not only an

entertainment activity; but also a change of daily habits. In the past few years, China's tourism market has achieved sustained, healthy, and rapid development (Zhou, 2021).

Despite these benefits, the development of the tourism industry often involves the penetration of outsiders. This process frequently leads to the loss of local control over the industry. Tourism has the most serious dislocating effects and yields the smallest relative benefits for locals when large-scale, high-standard facilities are rapidly introduced by outside developers into an otherwise poorly developed area; dependency rather than development, then results. Under such conditions, the disproportionate growth of the tourist sector fails to engender linkages with other sectors, particularly with agriculture; rather it causes dislocations, thus institutionalizing structural underdevelopment (Cohen, 1984).

Tourism is a highly seasonal activity that drastically affects the traditional way of life in agricultural communities. However, it not only retains community members, particularly unemployed youths from migrating away to economically sound regions, but also attracts outsiders who are searching for work and economic opportunities, and who often come from other branches of the economy, particularly agriculture (Cohen, 1984).

One of the most ubiquitously noted effects of tourism is its impact on the division of labor, particularly between the sexes. By creating new kinds of employment, it draws into the labor force previously excluded from the outside sphere, especially young women who now find employment either in tourist services, such as hotels, in the production of crafts and souvenirs for the market or in tourism-oriented self-businesses. This change, in turn, affects not only the division of labor within the household but also the status of women vis-à-vis their families and husbands. It occasionally leads to increased conflict and deviance within the family (Noronha 1977, edited by Cohen 1984).

Conversely, at the level of the local economy, tourism was wreaking other kinds of havoc. For one, wage labor opportunities created through tourism were disrupting the subsistence activities of small producers. Oliver-Smith (1988) described a case in Spain in which local hosts substituted their labor in farming with work in tourism. This made locals more dependent on the outside world. Rosenberg (1988) argued that tourism contributed to the demise of agriculture in a small mountain village in France,

where grazing animals came to be used mainly for clearing ski slopes. The disruption of subsistence activities was not necessarily a problem in itself, but it became a problem when the flow of tourists was reduced, and people were left with no economic alternatives from which to sustain themselves (Stronza, 2001).

On the same line, “Commodification of culture” exists due to intercultural contact, which is generally described as a process by which things come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade, thereby becoming goods (Cohen 1988). Greenwood (1977) used this concept in association with tourism to describe how cultural festivals lose their cultural and symbolic meaning to locals once they had been open to tourists and marketed like any other commodity.

A case in point is Levuka, an island of Ovalau, which was founded in the middle of the nineteenth century and built as a European town in European traditions, faced a form of cultural imperialism due to the introduction of tourism even after being free from European colonialism. It is seen as a tourist destination that is being preserved for European tourists to observe an aspect of their colonial past. Does the question arise as to what is tourism to the locals of Levuka? Do they feel that they are being forced to maintain someone else’s cultural heritage at a cost to themselves? In Levuka, at present, the number of tourists is low and any financial benefit goes to a few individuals, very few of whom are ethnic Fijians (Fisher, 2001).

2.2.2 Nepalese Context

Village tourism is concentrated in village settlements to generate employment and income for local people, preservation of the local environment and culture, and utilization of local natural resources. Village Tourism focuses on sustainability. For a developing country like Nepal, Village Tourism can play a vital role in sustainable economic development (Ojha, 2020).

In addition, there are natural and cultural attractions in or near the village. Tourists come to see these attractions. In village tourism, there will be local foods, the local style of accommodation and services. The villagers operate the tourist facilities and services through which they gain economic benefits. Village tourism does not need a large capital to operate but it needs proper and careful management; villagers must be trained, manage and operate facilities and services. Careful planning and program will

lead to maximum benefits from tourism in the village and minimize negative socio-cultural impacts (Kunwar, 2002).

Similarly, many people have found employment as guides and porters. Along the major tourist trails in the remote areas of Nepal, numerous locally owned and operated hotels have been established for travelers. These hotels have played a significant role in earning foreign currency for the nation (Gurung, 1998).

Banskota (2012), has done a study on “*Impact of Tourism on Local Employment and Incomes in Three Selected Destinations: Case Studies of Sauraha, Nagarkot and Bhaktapur*”. This study used a simple and short questionnaire to administer visitors. This study concluded that tourism cannot provide employment and income to all the people in a destination and hence it cannot be a panacea for economic development. But where there is potential to develop this sector, there is scope to provide opportunities to a larger number of people, given its labor-intensive nature. The result indicates local areas adjacent to tourism destinations appear to have a comparative advantage in vegetable production and should gradually move to specialize in this activity. There is also scope to develop the livestock industry to supply larger quantities of fresh meat and eggs.

When the Lake Rara National Park was established in western Nepal, several hundred Chhetri people were expelled from their traditional homeland with no compensation. This led to a wave of forest clearance elsewhere. Is tourism of more use as a substitute income for agriculture? In theory, this should reduce the need for land clearance, and remove people from villages as they take up seasonal jobs as trekking guides, shop workers or handicraft makers. This has had success. In the Khumbu region of Nepal, near Everest, agricultural production is now lower than before the growth of tourism, and tourism attracts at least one individual from each house for up to 10 months a year. However, different groups have been affected differently. Some farmers who have sold their land to tourist developers spend their money on short-term goods. These become the group marginalized by the new trade flow, with the ecological impact of being forced back into forest clearance or intensified land use (Forsyth, 1991).

In the context of Pokhara- Lekhnath, Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) has been evolving as a successful example of rural and ecotourism. The program has changed the traditional subsistence activities into a framework of sound resource management, supplement by conservation and development of alternative energy programs to minimize the negative impact of tourism and to enhance the living standards of the local people (Aryal et al., 2019).

Similarly, Pandey *et al*, (1995), researched “*Case Study on the Effect of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Chitwan-Sauraha and Pokhara-Ghandruk*”. This study aims to understand the culture of wildlife, camping and animal watching. The impact of its tourism activities on the lifestyle of the Tharus population was also analyzed. They used in-depth interviews with both households engaged directly in tourism and also those who were not. The interviews were reinforced by semi-structured questionnaires to collect information and opinions on the effects of tourism. This study used the existing secondary data, and found the following effects of tourism on cultural and environmental aspects in Sauraha.

Tourism in Sauraha has been a secondary factor in generating employment for the local population. Work in resorts/lodges is indeed significant for employment generation, while a whole series of activities catering to tourists have also provided work opportunities for people. However, it has an adverse effect on the environment. All hotels and lodges are held responsible for incurring environmental damages such as consuming large quantities of natural resources. Besides this, the Tharus started selling their lands to non-Tharu groups, but the money is not utilized for good or development. Ultimately, the Tharus have faced an encroachment on their cultural identity. Sauraha is now an area with a heterogeneous population. Moreover, local rituals performed at a certain time have undergone changes brought about by tourism leading to changes in the people’s activities. They are shortened because people are busy with other work these days. Traditional beliefs have been changed in this modern day and the rituals are being disappeared.

Rural tourism may have negative impacts on the economy and the local community. For example, Sauraha is a small city in Western Development Region of Nepal but one of the most visited popular destinations in Nepal. Many people are interested to

move/buying land there and starting a business over there. This has made the price of land in Sauraha much higher comparatively than elsewhere in Nepal. This has resulted in economic imbalance. (Pandey et al., 1995).

When tourists visit some places and spend some amount of money for the use of local goods and resources, it offers job opportunities for the local people and hence generates income locally. However, more demand for goods, products and infrastructures may create direct and indirect environmental mounting problems (Bista, 2009).

Along with the development of tourism in Nepal, the new young generations have been mostly affected by western civilization and fashion. They follow the westernized culture and this may harm the uniqueness of traditional Nepalese culture. Being one of the developing countries in South Asia, there has been growing illegal prostitution and child prostitution has been a major problem in Nepalese society these days. Nepal is one of the poorest nations in the world and it is somehow linked to the poverty of the country and its poor people that they are forced to do such anti-social business for the financial support of their livelihood and family (Pandey et al., 1995).

The research regarding the locals' perception of the impacts of village/ rural tourism has not been found yet, but many studies concerning the impacts of tourism on the local economy, and socio-cultural and environmental factors are available in Nepal. This literature review shows that locals' perception of the impacts of rural tourism is an important area to conduct research and there isn't much research regarding this topic. Very few researchers have researched this topic which is not enough to draw an effective plan. There is a lack of data collection, not many locals have been interviewed considering their opinions and very little qualitative data is available. The research gap considers all those missing pieces in the literature review regarding data collection, interviewing a larger group of people, and exploring the topic in more depth.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

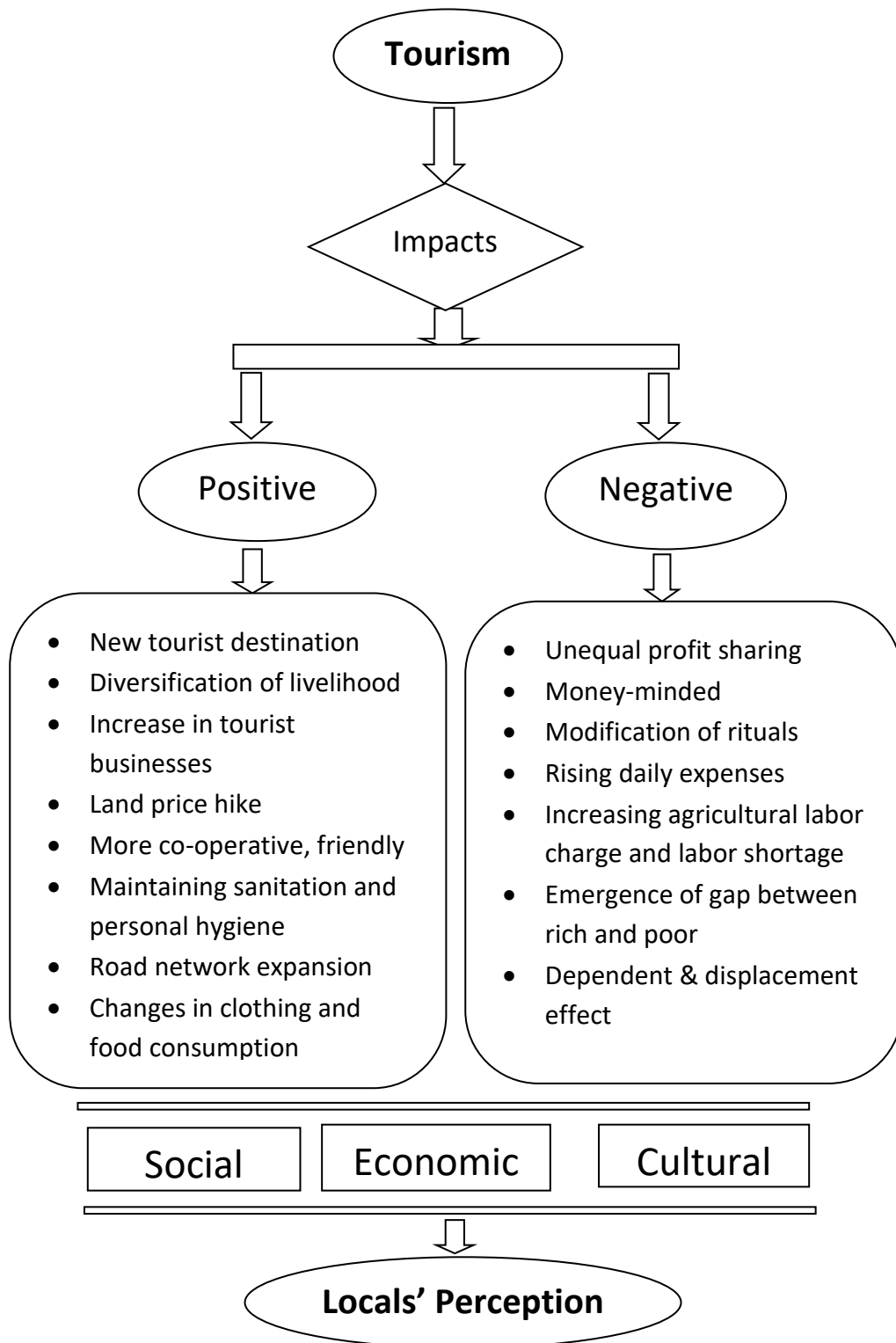
It is undoubtedly true that tourism is a powerful force that brings changes in various aspects of local people's lives and their community; be it social, intellectual, psychological, cultural; and economic being the crucial one. While the roles of tourism in the economic development of cities and in bringing several benefits to the locals are well recognized, tourism development has also affected rural communities in many ways.

To make tourism sustainable, consideration should be given to the impacts that tourism has on the host community. Many previous studies have been carried out reflecting the perceptions of tourists; however, this study focuses local population's attitudes toward tourism. This is important given the argument that a happy community is more likely to support tourism development and welcome tourists. It goes without saying that different communities have different cultures and traditions, and tourism development leaves different effects on them. This issue, especially in developing countries, is more important.

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the effects of tourism on the local community and local people's lives; and evaluate these effects from local people's opinions on whether they have been perceived as having positive or negative impacts in Methlang, Pokhara. More specifically, this paper analyzes tourism's economic, psychological, behavioral, social, and cultural effects on locals' lives as perceived by locals themselves. With regard to results, some suggestions for improvement as advocated by the locals are provided for extending the participation of the community in tourism development programs in order to heighten the quality of these programs.

The aim of this conceptual framework is to find out what the locals feel regarding the introduction of tourism and their activities, and whether they have had positive or negative experiences regarding the increasing flow of tourists in their area. It helps the researcher to recognize whether the locals are satisfied overall with the introduction of tourism or not in Methlang, Pokhara.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework of Locals' Perception towards the impacts of tourism in Methlang, Pokhara



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Rationale for the Site Selection

The study area is Methlang, Pokhara, Ward no. 18, among the 33 wards. It has become one of the main attractions for locals as well as domestic and international tourists to visit in recent years. There has been growing tourism in this area leading to the establishment of tourist businesses and activities such as hotels, restaurants, tea shops, parks, mini-supermarkets, cottages, and many more. Despite being one of the wards of Pokhara Metropolitan city, this place possesses rural characteristics as the majority of locals still rely on agricultural production and follow the traditional way of subsistence. The number of households in this area is also low as it is still scarcely populated featuring rural characteristics. Owing to the increasing flow of tourists in recent years, there have been both positive and negative impacts of tourism on the lives of locals. Thus, to study and examine the locals' perception regarding the rural tourism impacts, Methlang, Pokhara was chosen as an ideal place.

3.2 Research Design

My research uses qualitative methods to examine the experiences of locals' interaction with foreigners and the perception that they have instilled in them. In the qualitative research method, the researcher collects and works with non-numerical data to get a deeper understanding of the reasons, thoughts, and information about a particular topic (DeFranzo, 2011). Therefore, qualitative research is about collecting non-numeric data and helps us to get a detailed insight into the subject matter. In qualitative research, the researcher makes use of interviews, open-ended questions, journal articles, case studies, and classroom observations to collect, analyze and interpret qualitative data (Mohajan, 2018).

The purpose of choosing a qualitative research method as my research methodology is to collect data and information that is taken systematically from an individual's point of view capturing people's opinions and emotions. For this research, it is important to

have descriptive information rather than quantitative data. Therefore, descriptive research design had been used by the researcher to collect in-depth information regarding the impacts of rural tourism from the people's life experiences and their own perspectives.

There are a number of benefits of qualitative research methodology that includes: it creates a detailed understanding of the topic, gets wider knowledge about the behavior and attitudes of the targeted group and it is a more flexible approach to adapting different questions in order to get the best response from the people (Crossman, 2020). There are a number of reasons why I chose qualitative research rather than quantitative research methodology to collect data for my research topic. Firstly, my topic explores the locals' perception regarding the tourism impacts which requires a wide range of knowledge, life experiences, and people's perspective on that topic. Therefore, it requires an unstructured interview rather than a closed-ended (structured) so that participants could share their knowledge, real-life experiences they have faced, and this information could be used to get a deeper understanding of the topic.

The reason for not choosing quantitative research methodology for my research includes the: quantitative research is based on numbers, therefore it is more subject to misleading, it is difficult to choose the right techniques to collect and analyze numeric data, and failure to convert numeric data into understandable information. Thus, detailed information on that topic will be missing.

3.3 Universe and Sampling

The study population was all the locals of Methlang having their own sort of tourism businesses such as teashops, restaurants, cottages, farms, hotels, mini-departmental stores, and other tourist businesses, and are directly and indirectly associated and impacted by tourism.

The sample population for this study was selected using the purposive sampling technique, as it helps the researcher to select respondents for the interviews in a strategic way according to the relevancy of the research question. I visited the place directly meeting the locals in their restaurants, hotels, farms, and cottages, and

interviewed them. I interviewed the participants whose ages ranged between 20 - 50 years, thinking that they might have some experiences based on this topic so that they could share with us, and it would be much easier and less time-consuming to explain to them why I chose this topic for my research. For this research, data were collected until saturation, i.e. unless similar trends and patterns were repetitively expressed by the locals in their interview, and this was achieved until 14 participants were interviewed in-depth.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

Both primary, as well as secondary data, had been used in this study. However, the primary data and the information were most extensively used as the main source of this study work. For primary data collection, the researcher carried out face-to-face interviews and collected information conveyed by respondents through language in their natural settings. The researcher also tried to delve into the topics that the participants were at least comfortable expressing. Field notes were written detailing what the researcher saw and heard, and the details were organized around categories. The audio recording was also used to not miss any valuable information articulated by the respondents. Audiotaping these interactions helped guarantee that the expressive data were captured accurately and completely as they emerged.

The necessary secondary data were collected from published and unpublished sources such as journals, articles, magazines, newspapers, different websites, population statistic data, and relevant literature from the library.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure:

There are a number of methods in qualitative research to gather data such as direct observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, ethnographic research, content analysis, case study research, and so on (Crossman, 2020). In my research, I have used the unstructured interview to collect data that included in-depth interviews with the participants of Methlang, Pokhara.

The reasons for choosing interview with the participants as a data collection method to collect data are: it is more likely that we will get correct information on face to face interview, participants may ignore if we email them for information or may find time-

consuming to search on the internet and write a mail for each and every information. A face-to-face interview is free from technological distraction, both parties can focus on the topic and the interviewer can also read the emotion and behavior of the participant which might be supportive of the research (DeFranzo, 2014).

3.5 Ethical Consideration

There are a number of ethical principles that I followed while doing my research and which include:

Informed consent- My participants were well informed about my research topic, and why their opinions and experiences related to my topic are important to me, I made my purpose clear in the research and their importance for my research to develop new concepts and a deeper understanding of the impacts of tourism.

Voluntary participation- All the participants were not forced to participate in my research without their understanding of my research and their willingness to participate. The participants were informed about the research and any risks and benefits involved with this research and the participants decided whether to participate voluntarily or not.

Confidentiality- In the research, participants were encouraged to provide honest answers, so it is important to maintain confidentiality while analyzing the details they had given. Confidentiality is very important in research. Thus, I have maintained confidentiality by not disclosing their personal information.

Privacy- I have also given due consideration regarding the privacy matter in my research. I have not disclosed and asked for too much personal information like their family background, their hobbies, and so on in my research that are not relevant to my topic, and information that may trouble participants' privacy has not been published.

Besides these, as per the research plan, a Recommendation Letter was obtained from the Department of Sociology, Prithvi Narayan Campus. It was useful while collecting qualitative data, where the respondents were to be convinced of the originality of this Dissertation. After witnessing this letter, they were usually willing to take part in the interview. Before starting the interview, written consent was also taken from the participants. Withdrawal from participation at any time was acceptable. Those who

decide to quit the ongoing interview or questionnaire were excluded from the study. The confidentiality of the subjects was maintained. Those who did not want their age revealed were not asked for the same. The Nepali language was used for face-to-face in-depth interviews as Nepali is the locals' native tongue. Furthermore, moral obligations were considered during the data collection.

3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed, reviewed, and explored descriptively finding themes, as they were thematic in nature, and were presented in a cohesive manner. The themes were further classified into sub-themes that had the same meaning-making approach. Data collection was done under the close supervision of the advisor.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOCALS' PERCEPTION REGARDING RURAL TOURISM

4.1 Popularity of Methlang

The participants in this study shared their views regarding why Methlang is popular among tourists. A female in her 40s responded by saying that Methlang attracts visitors for its spectacular scenic view of the whole Pokhara valley, Phewa lake, the green forests, and the mesmerizing view of the mountains to the north. The researcher found that the tourists get to observe these amazing backdrops and feel like in heaven.

Another key point for its popularity as a new touristic destination would be the landscape of Methlang, which is quite unique as it comprises magnificent cliffs and escarpments that lure visitors. This means to say that Methlang not only offers a backdrop for gorgeous mountains and the lake, but it also has amazing landscapes, not to mention the cliffs and escarpments, which the tourists are more attracted to.

Asking some young respondents, it was found that they were emphasizing much on the trend of youths traveling to new places and uploading photos on social media sites. Owing to this, Methlang has turned out to be one of the touristic destinations in recent years. Tourists, especially domestic tourists, are awe-struck by the captivating landscape and the picturesque view that it offers. They take photos and upload them on Facebook and Instagram, to look trendy among friends and relatives.

One of the local respondents, Krishna Prasad Timilsina, who owns cottages for tourists shares his view regarding the experience of international tourists' stay in his place. He expressed his thoughts as follows:

“International tourists seem to be happy while staying in Methlang. I suppose the diversity of people and their local culture provide a sense of satisfaction to the tourists. This also makes it an inviting place for tourists to arrive.”

4.2 Changes in Occupation

Taking direct interviews with the locals, it was obvious that most of the households are still engaged in agriculture and cattle rearing as their major source of income. The majority of locals are still engaged in the same traditional profession, while some are gradually augmenting farming with the concept of organic farms, building cottages, and supplying dairy products enhancing their traditional agricultural practices and making them more commercially beneficial. Besides, the researcher also found out that the majority of the tourist businesses (mostly tea shops, restaurants, provisional stores, dairy farm, and the like) have been established for 6 months or even dates back to 8 years.

The researcher observed that agriculture and cattle rearing were the major occupations back then. However, as this place has recently grown into a tourist place and agriculture has become difficult to continue, some locals have set up organic farms and cottages for tourists. They also supply milk and ghee to the restaurants down there in the valley. This has become more beneficial and locals claimed to be quite satisfied now.

While interviewing some of the male respondents, who have been engaged in the tourism sector and have always known agriculture and cattle rearing as the primary occupation of this place, it was found that they have been involved in tourism carriers as paragliding pilots for 6 years. One of the respondents actually changed his pilot career after he met with an accident couple of years ago. Since then, he sometimes works as a driver and also runs a restaurant. Among many youths in this place, becoming a paragliding pilot has turned out to be the most promising career.

Some of the middle-aged women were interviewed regarding their occupational changes. It was found that their primary occupation was farming back then. However, the source of income got diversified in some households after their husbands went abroad. Thus, remittance became an additional source of income. Some of them even reported that after the return of their husbands, they opened up a restaurant and an organic farm, and started selling vegetables. Thus, to some extent, they have become able to augment their businesses due to the flow of tourists.

A similar case, where a 28-year-old female, Sabita Timilsina, shared her view regarding traditional occupation and the current occupation she has been engaged in.

“It’s been eight years since my marriage. Oh, time flies by (laughs). Agriculture and buffalo rearing was the key source of income for my family. But, for six months, I have had my own mini-supermarket and my husband works down in the valley as a teacher. We couldn’t be much happier.”

4.3 Reasons for Adopting New Occupation

It was apparent from the interview with locals that almost all locals were previously engaged in agriculture, cattle rearing, and farming before the introduction of tourism in that place. However, due to the increasing flow of tourists in the recent decade, most of the traditional occupations have been converted into service-orientated livelihood and tourism activities. As agriculture was only the subsistence means of income for locals, a shift in the profession has taken place in this area. While finding out the reasons for changing traditional occupation, several common reasons were documented: increasing labor costs for agricultural production, expensive farming manure and pesticides, monkeys destroying crops, scarcity of water and irrigation systems, group farming changing to individual farming, more hard work and less earning, higher future prospects and better opportunities from the tourism sector, and the like.

Locals claimed that farming was beneficial when done in a group. Things have changed recently. It was observed that people carry out farming on their own individually, which makes it harder to adopt as a primary income source as the cost of production becomes exorbitantly high. And, not to forget, the monkeys these days. They have taken a toll on agricultural production. Another key point for adopting the tourism sector as a new occupation is the requirement of high cost and investment, which is the greatest culprit of agricultural production loss. It’s hard to find agricultural labor in the village, and bringing workers from other places costs 1,200 per day these days. Lack of water supply and proper irrigation system has been the main problem that deters locals from continuing farming. On top of that, there is no benefit.

Some locals who don't have a large stretch of land like others claimed that they didn't find traditional farming sustainable and beneficial, especially for their family. According to them, it is impossible to sustain their lives only by growing crops. Some locals even mentioned that after opening up a restaurant and an organic farm, for three years, they are living happily as it has become possible to save some profits earned for the future.

It is also revealed that the tourism sector is less hard work compared to farming, as per locals. Growing crops and vegetables need a considerable amount of time and effort. Running a mini-departmental store is more beneficial and less hard work than plowing fields and getting hands dirty. Having said that, locals were also engaged in growing crops and vegetables, but for their consumption only. In a similar vein, a male local respondent, Hari Prasad Gautam, who believed that farming would be quite challenging for him shared his words in the following manner:

“I've turned 50 this year. I've turned grey too, I'm too old for my age to grow paddy and maize. As my family members are abroad, it's difficult for me to plough and cultivate the land. Employing workers from other places is prohibitively high. So, they have remained barren for some years.”

It is noticed that there is not much of a change in the way the crops are grown. The farming methods have still remained traditional, yielding less produce. It is a bit of hard work than other professions, and the farming techniques are not well-organized. This has made agricultural production less beneficial and burdensome for locals in Methlang.

Tourism for most of the locals of Methlang turned out to be the most promising and fulfilling career due to its high prospects in terms of income generation, diversification of livelihood, and sustainability. While carrying out research, it was uncovered that the majority of locals were quite satisfied with the flow of tourists and the change in their occupation.

Tourism is such a sector where anyone could benefit given the right condition and circumstances. It was perceived that despite their low education and growing old age and even with no training, some locals are able to make their customers happy on their own organic farm, teaching them how to grow crops, and vegetables and also

milking technique. Besides this, some are even successful in selling 50 liters of milk, 20 kilos of ginger (Rs.70 per kilo) every season and 10 kilos of fresh vegetables daily due to the growing demand of restaurants and hoteliers. Thus, they assert that they are completely satisfied with adopting a new way of commercializing farming and cattle rearing. Another case in point is that engaging in the paragliding jeep driving profession, plus having their own successful restaurants after the Covid-19 pandemic, some locals are satisfied with the current income source. So, embracing tourist businesses has helped locals to diversify their life helping them generate more profits. One of the local male respondents, Ramesh Dhakal, who himself is a paragliding pilot, expressed his thoughts as follows:

“Becoming paragliding pilots or paragliding jeep drivers, according to me, has been the most attractive profession for many local youths. It is obvious that no huge investment is required and there is a chance of earning comparatively high profits in these professions. This tendency has led to the shift in occupation among young people too.”

After interviewing a few locals who run mini-departmental stores in the village, it was disclosed that respondents have found it a bit more beneficial than just spending time farming. Some were happy to mention that no training was required for them to set up their businesses. No matter how small their saving is, they are happy than before following a different occupation, as the work is comparatively easier, and can also allocate their time to their family members.

Likewise, some women who were interviewed also mentioned good things about getting involved in the tourism sector. Almost all revealed that it has helped them boost their confidence and has facilitated enhancing their self-esteem.

The interviews with the owners of organic farms and cottages helped the researcher to disclose the fact that they are able to supplement traditional farming with the establishment of organic farms and cottages. Getting customers, especially international tourists living in their cottages; is helping them sell homemade dairy products (milk, ghee, and yogurt) as per demand. However, the locals claimed that they actually buy fruits and vegetables from the market though, as the supply from their vegetable farms isn't enough to meet their daily needs. It goes without saying that they are able to expand their businesses due to tourism leading to more profits.”

Overall, Methlang is slowly emerging as a newly popular tourist destination in Pokhara for domestic and international tourists. It lures visitors as it offers a spectacular scenic backdrop of the surrounding valley, mesmerizing view of snow-capped mountains, green forests, cliffs, escarpments, and the lake.

While finding out the reasons for changing traditional occupation, several common reasons were documented: increasing labor costs for agricultural production, expensive farming manure and pesticides, monkeys destroying crops, scarcity of water and irrigation systems, group farming changing to individual farming, more hard work and less earning, higher future prospects and better opportunities from the tourism sector, and the like.

Tourism in Methlang turned out to be the most promising and fulfilling career for most locals due to its high prospects in terms of income generation, diversification of livelihood, and sustainability. Less hard work, virtually no training and education, low investment to run small shops, and even viability for elderly people's involvement make tourism a favorable sector for the livelihood of people.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

5.1 Changes in Locals' Cultural Beliefs and Behaviors

When tourists arrive at a new destination, it brings about changes along with it. However, the intensity by which there occur changes depends upon the rigidity of locals' culture, the formation of their traditional societal institution, the need and necessity of locals, sustainability of resources, bearing capacity of the environment, duration of tourism establishment, and the like.

In Methlang, the majority of locals agreed that there have not many variations regarding the exercise of traditional cultural values, norms, and behaviors of locals. This means to say that there is not much of an impact of tourists on cultural practices and activities. Having said that, some locals, however, express their dissatisfaction regarding the commercialization of some cultural practices for mere economic gains. On top of that, according to those proponents, there have been some changes regarding not only food consumption and clothing style; but also on the social behaviors and perceptions of locals.

Some locals even emphasized the changes in their habits regarding hygiene maintenance, which they acquired from the tourists and adopted in their daily rituals for themselves as well as for the visitors.

After interviewing some locals in the area regarding the changes in cultural values, norms, and behaviors, it was recorded that they do not see many variations regarding the way they practice their cultural norms and values. It has been almost the same as it was before the introduction of tourism to this place. Having said that, the majority of the respondents also admitted that there actually have been some positive changes in the way the locals used to behave. Locals have become more cooperative and helpful. They are working together to bring in more tourists to the area intending to benefit all. They often meet and talk about any issues that may occur and try to sort them out. According to them, they even admitted that they go hand-in-hand together to develop

this place and to meet the expectations of the tourists, helping to establish this place as another popular tourist destination of Pokhara.

However, some respondents conveyed severe disappointment about the changes in local people's virtues and behavior after the establishment of tourism. Advocates of this point of view believe that people in the past were more approachable and cooperative with each other. Because of group farming, similar occupation, and less gap regarding the living standard of people leading to homogeneity; they never recognized anything other than the sense of communal belonging and mutual benefits. However, in recent years because of the flow of tourists in this area, there exists a gap between people earning higher and lower profits. For this reason, locals have adopted a tendency of competing with one another. This very behavior has made them self-centered and money-minded. This alteration in the virtue of people is neither beneficial to the community to foster; nor favorable to the local people themselves.

Nevertheless, some positive changes were also observed in the daily activities, sanitation habits, and regular chores of the locals. There were no toilets before, and people used to go to the nearby streams and brooks and to the jungle. Now, this scenario has completely changed as they started to realize the need to maintain sanitation and personal hygiene, thanks to the tourists visiting this place who made this possible. Besides this, it was discerned that the tourists' indirect efforts have also been educating locals and making them aware of personal hygiene and sanitation. Their efforts in the village have been truly appreciated and the locals express their gratification towards the immense help that they have been getting from the tourists visiting their place, especially in the field of maintaining cleanliness and personal hygiene. Visitors are thus regarded as the ones who directly and indirectly taught the locals to throw garbage and rubbish in the right places (into dustbins, garbage bins, or, assigning a place for it). In addition, locals also learned from direct observation of tourists' behaviors. This is one of the crucial steps taken to maintain personal hygiene in the area, though some of the locals are still yet to realize the importance of this in their lives.

Asking opinions on the changes concerning dressing style, most of the female respondents admitted that there have been many alterations in clothing patterns. It was noted by the researcher that in the past, dressing conducts among married women in

this place only accepted the 'sari' as the only taken-for-granted dressing code without any question or objection. However, it has not remained the same. Now, we see a lot of varieties of dressing senses of locals influenced by the visitors' sense of style and fashion. Most of them are inclined towards wearing 'kurthas', while there is also no hesitation in wearing pants even among middle-aged women. Asking one of the married women, Sabita Timilsina, about whether this is a positive or a negative influence, she said, " *I'm not too sure and don't want to label it as a good or a bad impact, but for most of us, we take it in a positive way as this clothing is much more comfortable than wearing sarees.* "

The adoption of western clothing sense by the local people has not always been taken as positive. Some, however, are not really satisfied with the modern dressing style, especially of young girls. It was recorded that the youths of today, especially girls are as much influenced by Western outfits as ever before. This could be because of the easy access to the internet and the tourists (locals and international) traveling to this place. Some locals have alleged that they find those outfits quite offensive sometimes as they are against their traditional cultural norms.

Some respondents also expressed their opinion regarding the impacts on food consumption habits due to the flow of tourists. It was found that a decade ago, all the locals were almost engaged in farming and they depended only on the local production for their daily staple food. Dhido (the nearest translation would be millet pudding), Gundruk (dried leafy vegetables), and Dal Bhat (rice and lentils) were the typical meals that the locals were used to eating. During snacks, they used to have Paniroti or Sukaroti (Similar to pancakes and chapaties) and usually black tea or Moi (Diluted Yogurt). But, in recent years, many alien cuisines have been introduced to this place as never before. Not only youths but also among middle-aged people; momoes, chowmein, paratha, some other chicken dishes, and many more, have become immensely popular. This changing food behavior and pattern have also been witnessed in the celebration of festivals and occasions nowadays. It is accompanied by the introduction of unfamiliar dishes along with the traditional cuisines though.

When some middle-aged respondents were interviewed, it was found that some locals even assert the fact that there have been changes in the thoughts of locals in recent years. It was revealed that a decade ago, people had a mindset of giving continuity to

what their fathers and forefathers had been doing as their primary occupation. So, almost all people were engaged only in agricultural activities which were merely subsistence farming. But today, it could be observed that many people have been diversifying their livelihood, augmenting their traditional farming with touristic services and business for more economic gains. Moreover, youths have now realized that they don't have to indulge themselves in traditional occupations like their forefathers. There are other fruitful alternatives that they can follow to earn their living, and tourism is one of them.

Although the locals are benefitting a lot from tourists, it is irrefutable that it has never been always positive. Scattered beer bottles along the side of the main road could be seen in some places. We must admit that locals here are able to enhance their living standards due to the flow of tourists. But at the same time, youths are learning some undesirable consumption habits. They have acquired the habits of drinking and even selling marijuana and other toxic substance to the visitors. According to the locals, tourists could be partly blamed for the adoption of these toxic habits and behavior as some tourists come to their place asking for these illegal substances.

Pointing out the scattered bottles to the researcher, one of the male respondents, Ramji Bahadur Dhakal, who is now virtually engaged in agriculture and dependent on remittance for his survival articulates his words. *“These are from the last night's drinking if I'm not mistaken. I have also seen some youths selling marijuana and doing drugs themselves with foreigners. How can I acknowledge, by seeing all of these, that there have always been positive changes due to tourism? You tell me...”*

In a similar vein, the extinction of some traditional rituals was also noticed. Times have changed. Almost nobody uses “Dhiki jato” (traditional equipment like a see-saw to remove the husk from grains) nowadays.

5.2 Societal Changes and their Causes

Social change is a concept many of us take for granted or do not even really comprehend. No society has ever stayed the same. Transformation is always happening. We accept change as unavoidable.

Sociologists, in general terms, define social change as changes in human interactions and relationships that transform cultural and social institutions. It is also defined as processes of change within the social structure, which serve in part to maintain the structure, and processes that modify the structure.

These changes occur over time and often have profound and long-term consequences for society. There are numerous and varied causes of social change. Four common causes, as recognized by social scientists, are technology, social institutions, population, and the environment. All four of these areas can impact when and how society changes.

From the research carried out in Methlang, Pokhara, some societal changes and their major causes have been found and addressed according to the locals' perceptions. Changes regarding the values and behaviors of locals due to the introduction of tourism have already been mentioned in the above heading. So, I have presented societal changes in some other categories and have dealt with their causes.

Interviewing the youths in the area, it was revealed that there have been many variations in terms of everything, be it social interaction, dressing style, consumption pattern, or even finding a partner these days. It cannot be ignored that social media has done a great job in the development of this area. Mentioning the increasing popularity of Tiktok and Instagram, the respondents also agreed that social media has played an immense role for so many young boys and girls, luring them to visit this place frequently. As I believe, their main intention is to roam around, take some pictures and upload them on social media. They also take stories home to share with their loved ones about this amazing place rich in the natural landscape. This, in turn, lures other people to come to this place. Youths are so much trendy nowadays that they don't want to miss a thing. So, this indirect pressure from the visitors has let the locals build more touristic infrastructures and provide more highly sought-after facilities in the community just to cater to their needs and demands for the sake of economic gains.

The majority of respondents talk about the recent development of Sahid Memorial Park for the visitors and comments on how important it has become to foster this area for tourism. This park, right after its completion, has brought in many visitors up until now. So, without a doubt, it is one of the greatest steps taken toward the growth of

tourism in this area. Locals are benefitting from it. The researcher also sees some health-conscious geeks walking all the way up to the hill, especially in the mornings as well as in the evenings. They take a rest in the park appreciating the beauty of the place. It was observed that the locals also meet up sometimes in the park and discuss how to improve this place even more. As a consequence of this act, locals have become more socialized, communicative and cooperative.

Comparing this place with the situation a decade ago, I have seen rapid growth in the construction of hotels, restaurants, low-budget local teashops, and provisional stores. This has been made possible by the increasing number of visitors in this region. Consequently, jobs have been provided to the locals and they are able to uplift their living standard. I have also seen that it has deterred some of the youths to leave this place and go abroad in search of employment opportunities. So, this has been one of the significant societal changes that one can observe in this area due to the flow of tourists.

Regarding the changes in occupational patterns, many locals are on the brink of leaving traditional farming patterns. They are either amplifying it with some other touristic businesses or have completely engaged in the tourist sector only. Subsequently, they are able to commercialize their occupation, making it profitable. As for youths, becoming paragliders and drivers are more moneymaking jobs. So, many locals have engaged in these occupations too.

Besides these, some newly built roads were also observed, which are about to be black-pitched in recent years. Asking about the accessibility to the place and the road network, all of the respondents came to the terms saying that this valuable change has brought numerous societal benefits. It has made transportation and traveling a lot easier than before. Visitors are undoubtedly increasing in number. This has also made it possible for travelers to reach out to every nook-and-corner of Methlang, Pokhara, appreciating the hidden beauty that wasn't explored before. This way, the businesses get expanded and the distribution of profits spreads among the locals.

Speaking of another crucial societal change, some respondents mentioned the scarcity of the drinking water supply. According to them, they had always been struggling when it came to a regular drinking water supply. It wasn't enough and had to fetch

water from the nearest water sources. The realization of this problem had to be solved when this place became popular for tourists and the demand for water supply increased unprecedentedly. For this reason, a water tank in the middle of the jungle has been constructed so that the locals could pump up water in order to meet their daily necessities of water consumption. This, so far, has been another greatest improvement in this community.

Majority of the locals displayed their happy faces when the researcher asked about the changes in the land prices as compared to 5-10 years ago after the place got renowned for tourists. All of the respondents answered in a positive way and quite in a similar fashion. Some said that the price of land has quadrupled, while others argued that there are three categories of land prices. However, all agreed that there has been an immense land price hike. One of the respondents, Krishna Prasad Timilsina, who got really excited in amidst the interview articulated as follows: *“Lucky us. It’s like every dog has its day. A couple of years ago, these lands were only used for farming and nothing else. It had almost no worth as compared to the present land value.”*

It was revealed that almost 7 years ago, the commonplace market value of 1 ropani of land was only 2 lakhs. There were no roads connecting various parts of this region and the land was basically useless for other purposes except farming. Even farming was difficult due to the scarcity of water and the prevalence of monkeys. Well, as of today, due to the tourism establishment, nobody wants to sell their land as it has become more precious. Even if sold to newcomers, it would become expensive for them. Now, the measuring unit is aana, not ropani (Note: 1 ropani equals 16 aanas), and one aana usually costs 7.5 lakhs on average.

However, the land price is classified into three categories according to the usefulness of the land. The first one is the land which overlooks mountains to the north and the lake to the south, and the surrounding serene view. This is the most treasured land and the price is definitely going to be high. This type of land usually costs you around 12-15 lakhs per aana. The second category consists of the land that only overlooks mountains or the lake. The price would be somewhat cheaper than the previous one, and the conventional price rate is 7.5 lakhs per aana. The last category of land includes the land primarily used for farming which does not overlook any of these

mentioned above features. They may have road access, but it is still counted as undeveloped. The price on average ranges from 5-6 lakhs as of today.

No matter how many benefits the majority of locals are achieving from the unprecedented land price hike due to the increasing flow of tourists, very few locals pour their hearts out expressing discontentment regarding the other detrimental effects that it has brought into place. Tourism, however, has somehow become successful in affecting the lives of a few locals negatively. Everything has become so expensive. Their daily expenses are rising and have to spend more money on their daily necessities. The labor charge is also high these days which has made farming more challenging. For say, one labor usually charges Rs.800 per day and the outcome is Rs.300-400 (as per one of the respondents; it might have been said rhetorically though).

The researcher's curiosity led him to ask more questions to locals regarding the change in land ownership due to buying and selling (if occurred), emergence or modifications of caste and class structures. It was found that very little buying and selling of lands have occurred so far. Those who owned a comparatively little piece of land and who were unable to gain many profits were indirectly forced to sell their lands to some rich business owners. This tendency has even led to the displacement effect of locals, though the proportion of these incidences is very low so far. We at least can predict that shortly, the figure could go high.

Well, previously, according to the residents, it was evident that almost all the locals were Brahmins in this place. But, as of today, they are starting to see some other castes as well. This took place due to the growth in the tourism industry. External people started to buy land as the business boomed. Having said that, it is relatively apparent that more than 90% of locals are still Brahmins. The village was believed to be homogeneous in all respects; same caste, similar class, and all of the locals were engaged in farming with similar income and quite a similar lifestyle. However, due to the rapid emergence of touristic businesses, a gap between locals in terms of income generation and their lifestyle is gradually starting to appear. Those who are located in a favorable location for business are likely to earn more profits upgrading their social status in the class structure. So, no matter how marginal it is, there occurs a gap among locals in terms of class structure.

5.3 Distribution of Benefits among Locals

When asked about the differences in the opportunities that the locals got from the introduction of tourism, some locals shared that everyone has an equal opportunity to uplift their living standards. They believe that it depends upon them whether they are capable of improving their status or not. Those who are hardworking and smart are probable to earn more returns, while those who are incompetent to do so generally lie stable in their class hierarchical spectrum.

Similarly, the ones who are engaged in agricultural farms, directly and indirectly, catering to the needs of tourists earn comparatively fewer profits than the ones engaged in touristic service-oriented jobs. It is also vivid that the locals who are hoteliers, medium-sized restaurateurs, and paragliders usually generate high revenues, which is attracting most of the youths nowadays.

What I see here in this place is that those, who are well-educated and have a good grasp of marketing their businesses online as well as deploying some other means to promote, are the ones receiving more returns. Besides this, I also found out that medium-sized local businesses are safe to operate and also earn a decent amount of money than the big names and businesses. These big businesses usually have to invest high amounts of capital and need to hire many staffs which have not been seen as profitable in this current situation (mentioning the current post-Covid 19 pandemic scenario).

However, one middle-aged female respondent, Maya Thapa, claimed the opposite of what was recorded previously.

“In my perspective, big businesses mean high profits. I agree that the investment would surely be comparatively higher than in medium-sized businesses, but they are usually able to attract a large number of customers leading to high returns.”

5.4 Tourists’ Demands and Problems faced by locals

The majority of the respondents of Methlang stressed more on public transport demanded by the tourists visiting there as it is so rare. Although many visitors do come here in their personal vehicles, it was found that some complain about the lack of public transport and the road network connecting nearby places in this region. This

region could have received more tourists if this was made possible. Transportation is the backbone of every kind of development. Owing to the lack of public transportation, even the locals have to pay expensive taxi fares to go down to the market and come all the way back home, just because this place is regarded as a tourist center. This is problematic, especially for the locals who are not benefitting much from the tourists.

Some respondents also highlighted the need for more facilitated hotels, cottages, shops, and supermarkets as they are highly sought-after by visitors. Those locals, who have run their cottages and restaurants, shared the experiences that they have had with different kinds of customers. Some visitors never complain and be content with the local services available at locals' disposal, while others are more demanding in nature and seek more comfort and advanced facilities. Some residents claimed that the problem arises sometimes with the customers as their cottages still lack attached bathrooms and the visitors have to share them. But, some are a bit whining and unwilling to adjust to the local offerings.

One of the female cottage and restaurant owners, Sabita Timilsina, adds, "*I am planning to install Wi-Fi in my cottages for its demand is quite high nowadays. Some of the tourists also request TV which I suppose sounds a far-fetched idea to me currently as my budget cannot meet the tourists' expectations.*"

As it is obvious that this region already has several hotels, but that's not enough. More businesses mean more tourists and ultimately more development. Visitors vary greatly in terms of their nature and choices. Variety is the key element that the travelers of today are seeking. On top of that, the consumption pattern and habits of visitors aren't the same nowadays. There is a high call for a plethora of cuisines. Restaurants as well as provisional stores should be able to cater to the needs of the customers.

Some visitors, however, request the establishment of adventurous activities, parks, and other recreation. Here is a word from one of the female respondents, Parbati Timilsina.

"I still remember the long in-depth conversation I had with one of the visitors. He told me that travelers nowadays seek places to rest, relax and take a couple of photos in

open spaces, such as in parks and gardens. Since this place is gifted with amazing cliffs and green landscape, establishing adventurous sports for visitors wouldn't be an exaggeration."

According to some locals, they claim that even though the popularity of the tourism sector is slowly disrupting the subsistence activities (mostly farming) of locals, the main problem is that when the flow of tourists reduces, the people are usually left with no economic alternatives from which to sustain themselves. This tendency is likely to make locals dependent on the tourism sector. A telling example of this was observed in the recent Covid-19 pandemic. The locals who were completely dependent on the tourism economy suffered the most. A case in point is Parbati Timilsina, an owner of cottages and a restaurant, who claimed that she was struggling and going through hard times during the recent lockdown caused by the widespread of Corona Virus as her living was almost completely dependent on the tourism sector. So for her, tourism is like a wave, you never know when it starts ebbing out, as it is not a sustainable means of economy.

An ex-trekking guide, Ramji Bahadur Dhakal, sadly points out the darker side of tourism. He shared his stories regarding the selling of drugs by the youths to the tourists and even learning to consume. *"No matter how rare these actions, these happenings bring detrimental impacts on young minds and their future."*

Methlang is so geographically diverse area, rich in steep hummocks, small hills, challenging cliffs, and scary dips. As per the tragic stories heard by the researcher in Methlang, two young teens died after falling from rugged cliffs while making Tiktok videos. So, these heartbreaking flashes might disrupt the flow of tourists in the area if the number of deathly accidents starts to rise.

5.5 Locals' views regarding improvement of tourism

Suggestion schemes encourage locals to contribute their constructive ideas for improving the tourism sector and mitigating the direct and indirect problems faced by them due to the increasing flow of tourists. So, locals' thoughts should be highly valued and should be taken into consideration as they are the ones who have direct encounters with tourists. Some of the appreciated recommendations provided by the residents of Methlang are mentioned below.

While taking interviews with the respondents, almost all mentioned the importance and the urgent need for quality road networks connecting the main streets of nearby places to make these places more accessible. Lately, this area not only has roads connecting the northern side (Sedi) of Lakeside, Pokhara; but also the roads connecting the inner places of Methlang and the main highway adjoining Baglung Bus Park. However, most of the roads need to be black-pitched for a comfortable ride for visitors. And, not to mention, the establishment of public transport so that the transportation fares greatly reduce. That way, all locals could get promoted by tourism.

Likewise, more hotels and businesses offering modern facilities to their customers are yet to be built to animate the place even more. More small and medium-sized shops should also open in this area. For the start-ups, these businesses' requirements are not huge, most of the locals could open up and get profits from it. According to some locals, they think that outsiders should also run their businesses so that they could learn from them to boost their businesses. Besides, they should also equip themselves with the necessary skills and abilities via training as per the need. This way, they become more professional and could cater to the needs of the tourists without any hassle making the experience of visitors more appealing and satisfying. On top of that, the hosts should, in most cases, place the demand of tourists as a priority and should also be conscious of the impacts of tourists' activities on locals.

Water scarcity has been the greatest enemy in this region. Even though a water tank has been constructed almost in the center of Methlang recently, some other alternatives should also need to be implemented to do away with the problem of water shortage.

Locals need to learn how to maintain cleanliness in their place. Although in the past years, they were directly and indirectly taught by the visitors either by observing or getting instructions from them, now it's time to implement some effective measures to manage waste and pollution. People need to be educated regarding the danger of disposing of waste and garbage hap hazardous and its impact on the tourism sector. This way, locals can at least make people aware of the potential risk of not maintaining sanitation, and encourage them to participate in every sanitation program to keep the surroundings clean.

One of the respondents, Ram Prasad Gautam, who offers farming lessons to tourists on his organic farms, emphasizes more on the tourists' wants and satisfaction. He says:

"I believe that the touristic infrastructures should be built as per tourists' needs and wants. They are the ones who are investing in our place to help us foster and earn our living."

Well, the most essential thing is that the locals need to cooperate together and should have a sense of belonging and brotherhood. They should meet frequently and talk about the issues that tourism may bring and the viable solutions to tackle those problems. Rather than being self-centered and money-minded, all the locals should join hand-in-hand and work for the betterment of all the residents of Methlang.

Overall, I was able to record both positive and negative socio-cultural impacts that occurred due to the flow of tourists in Methlang. Although the majority of locals suggested that there have been not much of socio-cultural changes, some respondents did pour out their dissatisfaction. On a positive note, it was uncovered that locals have become more cooperative and friendly, and have started to realize the need to maintain sanitation and personal hygiene, which they learned from direct observation of tourists' behavior. Similarly, locals also stressed much on the significant changes in clothing patterns and food consumption habits. The dressing sense of tourists and trendy clothes have been introduced in the area, along with many alien cuisines and ready-made snacks. In addition, the thoughts of locals have also been altered, as they have managed to diversify their livelihood by commercializing their farming in recent years. Youths are more engaged in the tourism sector, rather than indulging in less profitable traditional agricultural practices. Moreover, opening up Sahid Memorial Park, and increasing the number of hotels, restaurants, and other businesses have offered jobs to the locals, deterring them from going abroad. Another step forward in this place is the establishment of a water tank for water distribution.

However, on a negative note, because of an increasing number of tourists, there emerges a gap between people earning higher and lower profits, leading to a gap in class structure due to unequal profit sharing. Those who are capable or are located in a favorable location for businesses are earning more profits compared to others. This scenario has made the locals self-centered and money-minded. In addition, some

traditional rituals have also vanished. The more serious case would be the youths getting involved in selling and consuming illegal drugs and toxic substances, as mentioned by a few respondents.

However, being a new emerging touristic place, some of the negativities can be realized. Transportation has been a major problem as there is no direct route for locals. As a result, locals need to pay expensive taxi fares. The daily expenses of locals are rising, along with increasing labor charges, making agriculture difficult to flourish. What's more, tourist businesses are comparatively earning higher profits than agricultural farms. The most detrimental impact of tourism would be that it makes locals fully dependent on the tourism sector, and in the marginal figure, it could displace locals, forcing them to sell their land to rich businessmen.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Major Findings

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing businesses which enhances the economy of the country. This industry has experienced steady growth almost every year. All the nations in the world have given priority to this sector as the returns that it brings are fulfilling. If taken a due consideration, it does more benefits than demerits. However, the negative impacts that it brings are unavoidable too.

This study was conducted by the researcher to be acquainted with the locals' perception regarding rural tourism and to identify the positive and negative impacts in Methlang, Pokhara due to the flow of international as well as domestic tourists. This means to say that this research has aided the researcher to acknowledge whether the locals are satisfied with the tourism establishments that have been built recently or not; whether tourism has facilitated them to upgrade their socio-economic status, or whether is it putting pressure on locals stimulating them to follow foreign cultures, norms, and behaviors just to please while their visit. Although it is undoubtedly true that the locals benefit a lot from the introduction of tourists in their area, there are some detrimental impacts that the locals need to compensate for. There is very limited research in the context of Methlang, Pokhara, especially about the perception of locals. Though some studies have been undertaken related to Tourism in Pokhara-Lekhnath, most of them have been done from quantitative aspects, in which the locals do not have a chance to express their heartfelt experiences. Therefore, this study is important in fulfilling the research gap, capturing the experiences of locals using a qualitative research approach.

Although there are several methods in qualitative research to gather data, in my research, I have used an unstructured method to collect data that included interviews with participants until saturation. Data were collected using a purposive sampling technique from the local people of Methlang, Pokhara who have run some sort of tourism businesses, or who have faced the impacts of tourism one way or the other. I

have interviewed the participants whose age range is between 20 - 50 years old, as they usually have some experiences based on this topic and easily understand my research subject.

The major findings of the study have been summarized as follows:

- When asked about the popularity of Methlang, Pokhara, the majority of the respondents claimed that it is popular for its spectacular scenic beauty, the backdrop for mesmerizing views of the mountains and lake, and magnificent cliffs. On top of that, locals even claimed that the international tourists involve themselves in local culture and activities as they consider this place inviting and lively.
- Even though tourism has flourished extensively in Methlang, it was found that the majority of locals are still engaged in traditional agriculture, organic farms, and cattle rearing as their major source of income. However, some are able to enhance their traditional occupation by augmenting with tourism businesses making it economically beneficial.
- Becoming paragliding pilots and jeep drivers are the most promising jobs among the youth as these jobs deliver more returns. Opening up restaurants, cottages, provisional stores, and small tea shops were also seen as a widespread occupation among locals.
- After the interview with the locals, it was found that the inhabitants in the recent decade are slowly adopting new ways of subsistence based on the tourism sector. Some of the reasons for not following traditional farming are: increasing labor charges leading to high production costs, and the monkeys destroying crops in the fields. Shortage of agricultural labor, and not to forget the scarcity of water supply for irrigation as other major issues. Besides, the majority of locals don't find it more beneficial than involving in tourism.
- Farming methods have still remained traditional yielding less produce. This makes agricultural production less beneficial and troublesome for locals.
- It was found that the locals are adopting tourism considering it a promising career in terms of income generation, livelihood diversification, and sustainability.

Despite of low education level and even with no training, opening a tourist business is possible.

- Tourism has also helped locals to diversify their livelihood helping them to generate more profits.
- Some local women even mentioned that tourism is helping them to boost their confidence, making them more self-reliant, and also helping them to manage their household chores, such as taking care of their babies.
- Tourism offers benefits to the locals not having large stretches of land for agricultural goods production.
- Majority of respondents claimed that there haven't been many variations regarding the cultural norms and values practiced by the locals even after the introduction of tourism. However, they actually pointed out some positive changes in the behavior regarding sanitation and the daily habits of locals. They learned to maintain cleanliness and personal hygiene; and to become more cooperative and helpful.
- It was also found that there have been changes regarding clothing sense and food consumption patterns among locals, influenced by tourists. Kurthas and pants have become more popular than traditional sarees even among middle-aged women. Likewise, many alien cuisines have been introduced in this region, and are also prepared in the festivals too along with the traditional dishes.
- A majority of locals claim that the tourism somewhat has led to the change in the mindset of locals regarding the continuation of the traditional occupation. Youths now have realized to follow other fruitful alternatives to earn their living rather than sticking to the same old profitless traditional farming.
- Some locals, though, don't take the adoption of western clothing sense as positive. For them, it is against their traditional and cultural values, and find it offensive sometimes.
- A marginal proportion of respondents expressed serious concern regarding the change in people's virtues and behavior. For them, the tourism industry somehow has made them self-centered and money-minded, gradually drifting apart from the sense of belonging and mutual cooperation.

- Some respondents even mentioned the loss of traditional rituals, the use of Dhiki Jaato, for say.
- A very few respondents also revealed serious issues such as drug selling and consuming habits learned by the local youths due to the flow of tourists. However, according to them, these incidences are still low in number.
- The use of social media by visitors, according to some, has made Methlang even more popular as a new touristic destination. This allowed happening some of the construction of tourist infrastructures, such as Sahid Park, black-topped roads, more hotels and restaurants, and the like. Talking about the initiation of Park, one of the respondents supposed that it has made locals more socialized, communicative and cooperative due to regular meet-ups.
- Some other benefits of tourism were recorded by the researcher: locals getting jobs due to the increasing number of visitors, discouraging them to travel abroad in search of employment opportunities, and construction of more hotels, tea shops, and restaurants. As a result, locals are able to uplift their living standards.
- Due to the demand of tourists, Methlang has become more accessible as roads connecting various other parts of the region have been constructed. Some major roads have also been black-pitched. This has not only led to the increasing flow of tourists, but also to the distribution of profits earned from visitors among locals.
- A water tank supplying drinking water to the whole area is considered a major change, thanks to the institutionalization of tourism which put pressure on such initiatives.
- From the interview with the locals, it was recorded that there is a considerable rise in the land price of Methlang, which is one of the key benefits of the tourism establishments, according to the locals. The price went up from 2 lakhs per ropani to about 7-15 lakhs per aana in just a 7-year period.
- It was found that increasing tourism has made everything so expensive in this area. Daily expenses of locals have been rising making it hard for people, especially those who aren't benefiting from tourists and are engaged in traditional occupations, struggling to make ends meet. This situation is also

making farming more challenging as the labor cost is skyrocketing and the outcome is much less.

- It was found that very little buying and selling of lands have occurred so far. However, those having a little piece of land and who are unable to gain many profits were indirectly forced to sell their lands to some rich landlords and business owners. So, the displacement effect of some locals have had occurred, however, the incidences are very low in number.
- Talking about the changes in caste structure, it was found that almost all of the locals were Brahmins in the area previously. However, as of today, some other castes also emerged due to the expansion of the tourism industry.
- Locals previously had similar classes as almost all were engaged in subsistence farming with similar lifestyles. However, due to the rapid emergence of the tourist market, a gap between locals emerged regarding income generation and lifestyle. Those who are more capable and located in a favorable location for business have been earning more profits upgrading their social status in the class structure.
- Majority of locals agreed to the terms that everyone has the equal opportunity to improve their living standard. It's up to them whether they are capable of improving their status and economic condition or not. It was also recorded that those who are hardworking and smart are probable to earn more returns.
- For all, it was true that the ones who are engaged in agricultural farms earn comparatively fewer profits than those who are engaged in touristic service-oriented jobs.
- Asking about which businesses are more profitable, big or medium-sized businesses; the majority of respondents claimed that medium-sized businesses are safe to operate and do not require a massive amount of investment compared to big names. Only one respondent denied the aforementioned issue and said the opposite though.
- Lack of public transport has been a massive problem in this area, especially for those visitors not having their own personal vehicles. Very few roads have been black-topped and many more roads remain yet to be pitched.
- It was claimed by some that there is a need for more facilitated hotels, cottages, shops, and restaurants as they are highly sought-after by visitors.

- Not all visitors are happy with the local services, some demand modern unavailable facilities and are unwilling to adjust to the local offerings.
- It was found by the locals that visitors nowadays seek parks, adventurous activities, and recreational areas to sit, relax and take photos.
- The researcher observed that the main problem in this area would be that when the flow of tourists gets reduced, the people would be left with no economic alternatives to sustain themselves. This tendency is likely to make locals dependent on the tourism sector.

6.2 Conclusion

This study was carried out to learn about the experiences that the locals have had due to the introduction of tourism in their area (Methlang, Pokhara). Their views regarding the tourist experiences and their perception towards tourists were taken. It was clearly noticeable that almost all of the locals had pleasing moments and expressed their heartfelt positive attitudes towards thriving tourism in their area. Although it has brought some detrimental impacts on socio-cultural lives and the behaviors of locals, almost all opine that the advantages of this tendency far outweigh the drawbacks. Locals express their overall satisfaction with the establishment of the tourism sector.

Exploring more into the topic, the researcher has found that rural tourism in Methlang, Pokhara is slowly shifting towards urban features and planning. Due to the aforementioned issues in promoting traditional agriculture and farms, locals are seeking service-oriented businesses such as opening up restaurants, cottages, and hotels for tourists; and finding jobs in paragliding sectors and jeep-driving, as these are more profitable than continuing with the traditional farming. This picture can also be justified by the appearance of recent touristic establishments in the area destroying the less valuable agricultural farms. So, when tourists start to grow in an area, the locals lose their control over their traditional occupation and seek immediate gratification. This tendency could ultimately lead to the loss of cultural identity, and a change in the behavior of locals, and in their socio-cultural lives. Although the negative sides were far too low in Methlang, Pokhara as per the locals so far, these serious impacts cannot be underestimated, they may start to appear in the future once the area fully gets occupied. The initial phase of tourism, however, in Methlang,

Pokhara has been perceived as a positive change by the locals. So, in order to maintain tourism in this area, all the concerned bodies from all levels (local, regional and national) should liaise and cooperate to make sure that the potential negative threats of tourism are minimized.

REFERENCES

- Abdollahzadeh, G., & Sharifzadeh, A. (2014). Rural residents' perceptions toward tourism development: A study from Iran. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 16*(2), 126-136.
- Aref, F. (2011). The effects of tourism on quality of life: A case study of Shiraz, Iran. *Life Science Journal, 8*(2), 26-30.
- Aryal, C., Ghimire, B., & Niraula, N. (2019). Tourism in protected areas and appraisal of ecotourism in Nepalese policies. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Education, 9*, 40-73.
- Banskota, K. (2012). Impact of tourism on local employment and income in three selected destinations: Case Studies of Sauraha, Nagarkot and Bhaktapur. *Nepal Tourism and Development Review, 2*(1), 1-31.
- Bista, R. (2009). *Tourism policy, possibilities and destination service quality management in Nepal* (Doctoral dissertation, thesis submitted for the Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Macedonia, Economic and Social Sciences, Department of Applied Informatics, Thessaloniki, Greece).
- Brelik, A. (2018). Globalization in tourism. In *Economic Science for Rural Development Conference Proceedings* (No. 47).
- Butler, R. W. (1980). The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: implications for management of resources. *Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien, 24*(1), 5-12.
- CBS, N. (2011). Statistical year book of Nepal. *Central Bureau of Statistics*.
- Chuang, S. T. (2013). Residents' attitudes toward rural tourism in Taiwan: A comparative viewpoint. *International journal of tourism research, 15*(2), 152-170.

- Cohen, E. (1984). The sociology of tourism: approaches, issues, and findings. *Annual review of sociology*, 373-392.
- Crossman, A. (2020). An Overview of Qualitative Research Methods. Direct Observation, Interviews, Participation, Immersion, Focus Groups. Thought Co.
- DeFranzo, S. E. (2011). What's the difference between qualitative and quantitative research? *Snap Surveys Blog*, 16.
- DeFranzo, S. E. (2014). Advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face data collection. *Journal of Business Management*, 4, 23-24.
- Editorial. (2018). [The Kathmandu Post (TKP: Page 6), 13th Dec 2018.]
- Fisher, D. F. (2003). Tourism, culture and development: whose culture? whose development?
- Forsyth, T. J. (1991). Tourism: problem or solution to the Himalayan crisis? *Global Ecology and Biogeography Letters*, 1(3), 65-68.
- Gurung, T. B. (1998). Impact of tourism in the foothills of Nepal: a case study on income generation occupational structure agriculture production and firewood consumption patterns along the Dhampus-Pothana trekking route in Kaski.
- Kataya, A. (2021). The impact of rural tourism on the development of regional communities. *Journal of Eastern Europe Research in Business and Economics*, 652463.
- Kunwar, R. (2002). *Anthropology of tourism: A case study of Chitwan-Sauraha, Nepal*. Adroit Publishers.
- Lepp, A. (2007). Residents' attitudes towards tourism in Bigodi village, Uganda. *Tourism management*, 28(3), 876-885.
- Liu, J. C., Sheldon, P. J., & Var, T. (1987). Resident perception of the environmental impacts of tourism. *Annals of Tourism research*, 14(1), 17-37.

- MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *American journal of Sociology*, 79(3), 589-603.
- Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7(1), 23-48.
- Murphy, M. (2014). What are the benefits and drawbacks of case study research? *Research and Education*, 80-82.
- Nepal Tourism Board (NTB 2018). Gon. Available at: <http://www.ntb.gov.np>
- Nepal Tourism Statistics (NTS 2016)]. Gon. Available at: <https://old.tourism.gov.np>
- Niroula, S. (2003). Toward sustainable tourism: Nepal step in fine tune. Regmi, R. K. (Ed.), *Sustainability: The Lasting Fuel*, (112-114).
- Ojha, N. Sustainability in Nepalese Tourism Industry, January 2020.
- Pandey, R. N., Chettri, P., Kunwar, R. R., & Ghimire, G. (1995). Case study on the effects of tourism on culture and the environment. *UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific*.
- Robertson, R., & Turner, B. S. (1989). Talcott Parsons and Modern Social Theory—An Appreciation. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 6(4), 539-558.
- Shrestha, D. (2016). Rural Tourism in Nepal. Available at: <http://www.nepalruraltourism.com/> [Accessed 06 April 2022].
- Shrestha, H. P. (2000). *Tourism in Nepal: marketing challenges*. Nirala Publications.
- Stronza, A. (2001). Anthropology of tourism: Forging new ground for ecotourism and other alternatives. *Annual review of anthropology*, 261-283.
- Upadhayaya, P. K. (2009). Post conflict Tourism in Nepal: Challenges and Opportunities for Preventing Latent Conflict. *The GAZE Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 1(1), 28-42.

- Upadhyay, R. P. (2008). A case study of rural tourism in Sirubari, Bandipur, and Ghalegaon. *Readings in Rural Tourism, Sunlight Publication, Kathmandu, Nepal.*
- Upreti, B. R., & Upadhyaya, P. K. (2013). Tourism in Pokhara: Nepal's pride and means for peace and prosperity. *Tourism in Pokhara: Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity*, 1-25.
- Urry, J. (1992). The tourist gaze "revisited". *American Behavioral Scientist*, 36(2), 172-186.
- World Bank. (2009). *The World Bank Annual Report 2009: Year in Review*. The World Bank.
- World Tourism Organization (Madrid)., Network, W. E., University of Hawaii (Manoa)., University of Calgary (Calgary, Canada)., & James Cook University (Australia). (1997). *International tourism: A global perspective*. World Tourism Organization.
- WTO, (2018). Annual Year Book of Tourism Statistics. Madrid: *World Tourism Organization*.
- Zhou, J. (2021). Statistical research on the development of rural tourism economy industry under the background of big data. *Mobile Information Systems, 2021*.

Appendix-A

Informed Consent Form

LOCALS' PERCEPTIONS OF RURAL TOURISM IMPACTS IN METHLANG, POKHARA

Namaste! I vow that this unstructured interview would be asked of you only after receiving your written consent. I will consider your privacy and will not expose this information to anyone for any reason except for my course completion of my Master's in Sociology. I thank you for your valuable time and I will cancel this interview anytime if you want to discontinue after having started the procedure.

Sagar Prasad Tiwari

(Signature).....

Class Roll No.: 48

PU Registration No.: 6-3-48-48-2018

Batch: 2019-2022

Respondent's Approval to take part in this interview voluntarily:

I (Full Name) agree to be a participant of this unstructured interview of my free will.

(Signature).....

Appendix-B

Interview Schedule for Local People

Respondent's No.....

General Information

Name of respondent

Age.....

Sex.....

Religion.....

Marital Status.....

Caste.....

Educational Attainment.....

Occupation.....

Monthly Income.....

Monthly Expenses.....

Type of family.....

1. How long have you been living in Methlang, Pokhara?
2. What is your traditional occupation?
3. Are you following the same traditional occupation?
If yes, why?
Are you satisfied?
If no, what is your current occupation?
4. Why did you leave your previous occupation?
OR, what are the main reasons for adopting new occupation (tourism)?
5. Are you satisfied with your current occupation (tourism)?
6. Is Tourism your primary or secondary profession? If secondary, what are the factors which attracted you to choose this profession?

7. How much hoteliers consume local production?
8. How long have you been engaged in this tourism sector?
9. Have you taken any training before entering into this sector?
10. Are there any changes in your income generation due to new occupation (tourism)?
11. Are you following the same traditional cultural values, norms and behaviors?
12. How have you prepared as a member of community to promote tourism in your society?
13. How do you make a plan to sort out the negative effects caused by tourism?
14. Have you felt any changes or loss in your indigenous identity due to the influence of tourism?
15. What changes have you faced in the traditional cultural values, norms and behaviors?
16. Are there any societal changes that you have noticed due to the introduction of tourism?
17. What are the positive and negative effects that are caused by tourism in your local community? Please express your views.
18. Do you think; all local people are getting equal opportunities in tourism sector? If no, who gets more opportunities and why?
19. Are there any problems faced by you due to tourism sector?
20. What are the problems you are facing due to the demand of tourists? Please mention.
21. Any suggestions for improvement?

THANK YOU!

Appendix-C

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

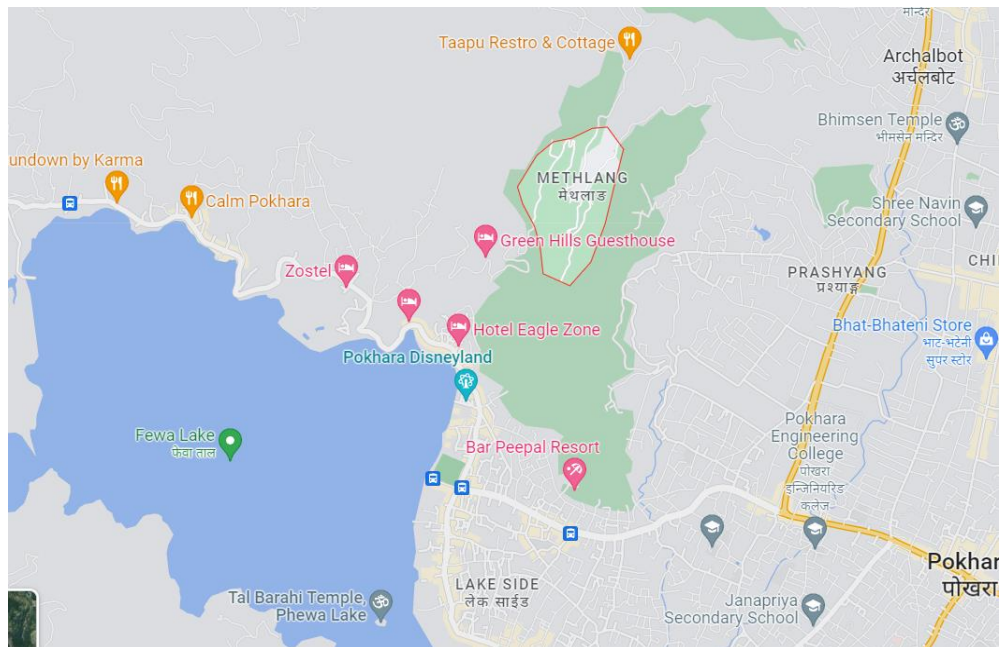


- 1 Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies
- 2 Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfillment
- 3 Tourism, a factor of sustainable development
- 4 Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and a contributor to its enhancement
- 5 Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities
- 6 Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development
- 7 Right to tourism
- 8 Liberty of tourist movements
- 9 Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry
- 10 Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism



Appendix-D

Map of Methlang, Pokhara



Appendix–E
Photos from the Site









THANK YOU!